

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 2, 6, 11, and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 5,846,264 to Andersson et al.

In the Office Action, claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 5,861,008 to Obel et al.

In the Office Action, claims 11, 12, and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 6,038,474 to Zhu et al.

In the Office Action, claims 1-8 and 11-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Publication Number 20030208241 to Bradley et al.

In the Office Action, claims 1 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 6,456,881 to Bornzin et al.

In the Office Action, claims 1 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 6,697,673 to Lu.

In the Office Action, claims 15 and 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bradley et al. in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,731,978 to Olson et al.

In the Office Action, claims 9, 10, 16, and 17 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In response thereto, claims 6 and 7 have been cancelled and claims 2 and 8-10 have been amended. Accordingly, claims 2-5, 8-10, and 12-20 are now pending. Following is a discussion of the patentability of each of the pending claims.

Independent Claim 9

In the Office Action, claim 9 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, claim 9 has been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of base claim 6 and

intervening claim 7. It is respectfully submitted that amended claim 9 is in condition for allowance.

Dependent Claims 2-5 and 8

Claims 2-5 and 8 depend from claim 9 and are similarly patentable. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are in condition for allowance.

Independent Claim 10

In the Office Action, claim 10 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of base claim 6 and intervening claim 7. It is respectfully submitted that amended claim 10 is in condition for allowance.

Independent Claim 15

Without addressing the merits of the rejection of claim 15, in accordance with the American Inventors Protection Act, the Bradley et al. reference does not qualify as prior art for a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) via 35 U.S.C. §102(e) because the present application has been filed on or after November 29, 1999 and the subject matter of the Bradley et al. reference and claim 15 were, at the time the invention was made, subject to an obligation of assignment to the same organization. Accordingly, the Bradley et al. reference no longer qualifies as prior art under 35 USC §103(a) via 35 USC §102(e) and it is respectfully submitted that claims 15 is in condition for allowance.

Dependent Claims 12-14, 16, and 17

Claims 12-14, 16, and 17 depend from claim 15 and are similarly patentable. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are in condition for allowance.

Independent Claim 18

For at least the same reasons discussed previously with regards to claim 15, it is respectfully submitted that claim 18 is in condition for allowance.

Dependent Claim 19

Claim 19 depends from claim 18 and is similarly patentable. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 19 is in condition for allowance.

Independent Claim 20

For at least the same reasons discussed previously with regards to claim 15, it is respectfully submitted that claim 20 is in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above claim amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance, and an early notice of allowance is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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